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plain that its streets were streets of gold. That is the point. Are our houses of business halls of pure and lofty fellowship? Is our life together always so elevating that we are kept up to our best, and our minds constantly inspired by what is good and true? There is something degrading and coarsening to the spirit, as things are, in ordinary business and amusement. One of our writers talks about what he calls 'the hypnotism of the streets'; and the phrase is true. Our whole world is materialized and materializing. Its artificial glamour, its vulgar advertisement, make constant appeal to what is selfish in us. The world is so organized on the side of materialism that we cannot escape from its clutch without deliberately seeking to cut ourselves free. It is that detachment which Sunday worship provides. It is the opportunity to close the door that we may become aware of the spiritual and eternal. We must take means to give the thought of God and His truth and love a chance to possess our being. It is that which the fourth commandment demands.

There is a principle behind this injunction which ought to be laid hold of. God is seeking to make Himself known, and if we are quiet enough to give Him opportunity, He will become a reality. The spiritual world will break in. The spiritual instinct which is a part of every man's nature will assert itself. God is unreal to many people because they are never quiet enough and still enough to become aware of Him. The religious instinct is often thwarted and buried beneath the pressure and burden of life with its constant rush and strain. But it is there, and in various ways it makes its presence felt. The sense of disillusionment, of frustration, the feeling of misgiving and despair, which lie like a blight on many a heart, reveal this lack of harmony with life. The very demand for

more pleasure and amusement is often the craving to escape from this inward conflict and unrest. The sad tale of nervous instability and various forms of breakdown is a commonplace. The reason is that in many cases the spiritual world has been shut out, and Nature has revolted in this loss of mental stability and inward peace. We have created a world which we have no power to control, and the result is that we are in danger of being destroyed by it. Where this process will end no one can say. But the first step back to peace is through the quietness in which for a time the world is shut out, that man may find God and be found of Him, and so regain the power to be truly master of the world. The interests of the world make for death, St. Paul tells us; the interests of the spirit mean life and peace. We grow in life, as a well-known philosopher has reminded us, in the measure in which our interests are more and more detached from the material, and are rooted in the spiritual. Our true joy in life and our power over the world come from the control of God within. And for this we need to cultivate the mood of detachment. The quietness in which we find contact with God may be difficult to attain at first. Our ears are so full of the clamour of the world that we can hear little of the voice of His Spirit. Many people have lost the power to be quiet and to concentrate on the unseen and eternal. The effort to worship is like trying to listen to the music of some fine orchestra amid the babble of a crowd. At first we can only catch a note or two, here and there. But gradually the ear becomes more sensitive as it strives to listen, and bit by bit the music takes control, and comes to fill the mind with its melody. The value of Sunday is to provide the opportunity for this quietness. It offers us the chance to be still and know that God is, and that He is waiting to be gracious.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

The 'Queen Mary's' Message :

'I am following my course, full speed.'

BY THE REVEREND P. N. BUSHILL, B.A.,
ORPINGTON.

'None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy.'—Ac 20²⁴.

I SUPPOSE everybody in Britain has been interested in the sailing of the *Queen Mary*. I am not going

to waste my time by giving you particulars of the size and accommodation of the boat—the number of miles of wire and cable, the size of the funnels, the number of decks, and so on: for one thing, you probably know much more about this than I do! But I want to remind you of that broadcast to schools which took place from the ship when she was in mid-Atlantic on her maiden voyage to America. You remember you heard Commodore Sir Edgar Britten, the Captain, and Mr. Llewellyn,

the Chief Engineer, and of course the B.B.C. commentator who introduced them to us and explained all sorts of things to us. Then do you remember, at the conclusion, the booming of the *Queen Mary's* siren—that deep majestic note? The commentator told us that she was not only saying 'Farewell' to us, but was speaking a message which those versed in ships' signals could well understand, and the message was, 'I am following my course, full speed.' That was a fine message for the ship to give to boys and girls.

We must first know our course, if we are to follow it. The *Queen Mary's* course was quite clear. It was the Captain's first duty to bring the vessel safely from Southampton, *via* Cherbourg, to New York. Everything else on board ship had to be subject to that main purpose. There were all sorts of games on board ship, there was the comfort of the passengers to attend to, there were meals to provide of extraordinary variety, but all these were minor matters in comparison with the main purpose of the voyage. The *Queen Mary* had a definite course to take. Have you a course in life? Many people seem to go through life without any settled course at all—like ships sailing on the ocean without chart or compass. But you have a course, haven't you? What is it, I wonder? Many, I suppose, would say that it is from earth to heaven. Yes, but God wants us to take the right course through life. Paul had a course in life to take, but all through that course he had one supreme purpose in view. What was it? He tells us: 'That with all boldness Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.' That is a fine purpose for you to have, boys and girls, a fine course for you to take—that you will do nothing mean or untrue, and that all through your life Jesus Christ may be glorified by your words and deeds day by day.

The broadcast message from the *Queen Mary* brought us another lesson, and that is that we must continually set our course. When Sir Edgar Britten spoke from the bridge he said that he had just previously been engaged on one of the most important duties he had, that was the fixing of the position of the ship. A boat has all sorts of things to contend with; currents of the mighty deep can move mighty vessels out of their course, even strong winds persistently blowing can affect the course. Continually it is necessary, with the most modern instruments, to find the exact latitude and longitude of the vessel, thus to see that she is

keeping her course. There are also many things that take us out of our course in life, if we are not very careful: strong currents, like the force of evil temptations; powerful winds, like the advice of our companions and friends. We need continually to set our course, so that we shall not be moved aside. God has given us Sunday each week to help us in setting our course: but once a week is not enough; every day, and continually, we need to fix our position, and ask God to help us to keep our right course. Read the words of the text again: Paul was leaving Ephesus, and his course took him to Jerusalem, but friends wanted to dissuade him because he might have to suffer there: what did he say? 'None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy.'

Then, full speed ahead, when on the right course. How lovely it must be to command a vessel to go 'full speed' across the broad waters of the ocean! No built-up areas there! No speed limits! Just as fast as ever you can! So different here on our roads and lanes: why, we cannot even cycle full speed here! That was the *Queen Mary's* signal, 'full speed.' But it must be on the right course. If, perchance, some mistake had been made, and the ship were out of her course, then the faster she went the more grievous the mistake would have been. There are some people who go full speed in the wrong direction—use clever inventions to wage war, spend long hours plotting evil. Be sure that you are on the right course, and then 'full speed.' Don't slacken: don't think things are easy. Sometimes a great athlete has lost his prize because he has been over-confident, and just for a moment slackened speed. There must be no hesitancy, no looking back, no slackening of effort in the Christian life.

Then there is the end of the course. Great was the excitement in New York when the *Queen Mary* arrived. She had accomplished the main purpose of the voyage, which was not to break records, but to land the passengers safely in New York. We have mentioned Paul several times; well, when he was quite old, he wrote to Timothy: 'I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.' And you boys and girls, in many, many years' time, will also have the joy of being able to say the same thing, if you can truthfully adopt the message of the *Queen Mary* as your own, 'I am following my course, full speed.'

BIBLIOTHÈQUE
PUSSEIAN & SON

The Church that is like a Cross.

BY THE REVEREND D. T. DAVIES, M.A., B.D.,
LONDON.

'Behold the pattern of the altar of the Lord.'—
JOS 22²⁸.

The writer of the last book of the Bible tells us that in the Holy City he saw no temple, that is, no church. To-day we can hardly think of any big city without a noted church in the centre of it. There is Edinburgh with St. Giles, Dublin with St. Patrick's, while no one can be long in Paris without seeing the great cathedral, Notre Dame.

In London we have two great churches which share the glory of fame, St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. Not long ago St. Paul's was half closed, because the workmen were busy making strong the pillars beneath the big dome, but we can have the run of the Abbey. Now, girls and boys, suppose we visit this sacred bit of England, with its tall twin towers, which stands across the road from Big Ben, whose loud booms you have often heard on the 'Wireless.' Once inside, there are two things that claim our notice. The one is the plan of the Abbey. It is built in the shape of a *cross*. The other is the fact that so many of the great and noble men of the past lie buried within its walls. These are not buried anywhere or anyhow, but after a fitting and well-thought-out order.

As you know, the main point in a cross is the head or centre, then come the right and left arms, with the foot or the base at the bottom. In Westminster Abbey the tombs of kings and queens are found at the head of the cross; even from as early a time as that of Edward the Confessor. Everything here reminds us of the throne of England, notably the ancient chair with the Stone from Scone, in which the sovereigns have been crowned for centuries.

If I were to ask you which hand you use to throw a ball or swing a club most of you would reply, 'Right hand.' This is the hand of strength. We are not surprised, therefore, that the *right* side of the Abbey has been set apart for the names of great statesmen like Pitt, Peel, Gladstone, and others. They had to do with the making of our laws, the Acts of Parliament, which have behind them the power of the Empire.

Turning our gaze towards the left side, we come to an interesting part, namely, the 'Poets' Corner.' How often after a cross-country run, or a hurried scamper to catch a train, you have felt something beating rapidly on your left side. This is the place

of the heart—the place that befits such names as those of Shakespeare, Burns, Tennyson, Longfellow, and Browning, they who have written of the things of the heart, of love and joy and beauty. Next we come to the nave or middle part of the building, which stretches down to the main door at the bottom end. Again we stand upon holy ground, because here are memorials of the great benefactors, pioneers, inventors, doctors, who have found a way to ease pain and so make life happier and more safe for us. Last of all, at the point which may be called the base of this cross-shaped fabric, we come to the graves of David Livingstone and the Unknown Soldier, two mighty men of valour who laid down their lives, not only in service, but in sacrifice for their fellows.

Yet the Abbey was built in honour of One who is greater than all these. Its pattern is taken from that 'green hill far away, without a city wall,' where Jesus Christ won a victory, the fruits of which He is willing to share with us. Because, to follow the Christ as King of our life is to be given the right hand of power to conquer temptation, the kind and tender heart to feel for others and to show it in the doing of good turns for the sake of men and unto the glory of God.

The Christian Year.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Second Deliverance.

'For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?'—Ps 56¹³.

Now and then a time arrives in life when some strain is lightened or lifted from us. Whether it is the recovery of an individual from illness, or the end of some business anxiety, or the release of a nation from the tension of war, we enjoy it, this calm after the storm, this relaxation after days of critical pressure. But we are not always the better for it; morally the better. People are too apt to let themselves go and to throw off restraints, as they feel that life is once more in their own hands. All but the best are likely to be the worse for a period of reaction.

'Our critical day,' Dr. John Donne remarks, 'is not the very day of our death, but the whole course of our life. I thank him that prays for me when the bell tolls, but I thank him much more that catechises me or preaches to me or instructs me how to live.' That is precisely how the Psalmist

felt, more than twenty centuries before Donne, when he wrote this prayer for the second deliverance: 'Thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?' He, too, had realized that our critical day is the whole course of our life.

Here's a man upon whom the serious things of life have not been wasted. Who he was, and when he wrote, we cannot tell. But that is no matter. What does matter is that he has learned one of the deep lessons of life, namely, that we need God as much for the hours of light and movement as we do for the hours of darkness. That may sound obvious. In theory it is, but do we not know how easy it is to forget the truth of it in actual life? When the sharp hour is over and relief arrives, we who had called upon the Lord urgently will now proceed to behave as though we could manage for and by ourselves *in the light of the living*. Were we honest, we would confess that at heart we really do not believe there is the same need of prayer in health and smooth hours as in the desperate situation. But there is! I have regained my health, says the Psalmist, I have recovered my stride, but I do require God as much as ever I did. He has given life back to me, and only He can show and help me to use this gift aright, to *walk before Him* instead of strolling or straying over the course. To *walk before God* was a Hebrew phrase for living ever mindful of the Lord, conscious of Him as our standard and strength.

Not that one can be always thinking of God. His Spirit rules our lives even when His name is not on our lips. We do not invariably turn to the sun in whose light we do our work. But the consciousness of God pervades the religious soul.

A prayer like this takes issue at once with one popular and easy creed of to-day, the creed that whatever is natural is right. Life is swarming with impulses, we are told; obey them, enjoy them; walk before the shadow of your own wonderful self, and let its changing variety of instincts and appetites be enough to direct you, instead of cramping yourself by following any so-called rule of God; if you repress or thwart an impulse, you suffer for it. Now religion is most natural, but what we call 'natural' is not always religious. Not by any means. There have been indeed unwise repressions in the sphere of religion; nevertheless, character in manhood and womanhood depends upon the mastery of impulses. Otherwise we never become mature.

Then again, short of this, there is the tendency,

even among good and well-meaning people, to forget the need of the second deliverance. When preparing young people for their first communion, I used to be struck by the admission of some that they said prayers at night, but not in the morning. Not because they were too hurried in the morning, they agreed, when one pressed them for a reason, but because they had the notion that they could look after themselves in the daytime, whereas at night they had to depend more upon God. Perhaps the spirit of this mistake is not confined to young folk. Certainly it is a danger present to the minds of thoughtful Christians. Charles Wesley knew what he was doing when he wrote this prayer for us to sing:

Plenteous grace with Thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound;
Make and keep me pure within.

'Make,' you see, '*and keep* me pure within,' after the first deliverance. We sing:

Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me;

and if we sang with the understanding we would realize the deep significance of Lyte's line. He did not add 'and sunshine' to fill out the line with a neat phrase. He wanted us to realize precisely what the Psalmist felt in his prayer for the second deliverance, namely, that we require the presence of God to meet the sunshine no less than the cloud. The one may be as critical as the other.

Life is, indeed, so much more difficult than most of us, in the flush of regained power, are willing to allow. Even when we honestly mean to go straight, there are many risks of failure. Consider how difficult it is, *in the light of the living*, for example, with the needs of human life so clearly cut, even to be just and kind wisely. We may be disposed to think that it only requires a good heart to be fair to our fellows or to handle them in a kind way; but justice is far from being a simple thing, and so is kindness. The good intention is something, but it is by no means everything. Wisdom and patience are required; otherwise a project may go wrong. Even to give money or advice is in many cases a far more intricate and exacting matter than in our impulsive moments we realize. We do require God to guide us, even when we are thoroughly alive to our duties. If we become self-sufficient, then life lies open to many a blunder. Start without prayer, even on some line of good intention, and there is no guarantee

against mishandling the very objects of our aid. For prayer implies the thoughtful reference of life to God's wisdom.

Again, there is the subtlety of sin to be reckoned with. The plain fact is that a bad habit will start up, long after we had overcome it, as we thought, or temptations may change their form from youth to middle age, and unless we are watchful and praying we may fall into inconsistency and error, as we forget to hold life steadily in the form of a responsibility from God.

Especially, our Psalmist feels, there is the risk attending any intense experience of the soul. 'Thou hast delivered my soul from death.' Fill that up as we may, the point is that when the high moment passes we encounter a phase of less acute emotion than the thrilling or painful emergency provided. But here is where the staying power of our religion comes into play. Let us put it in this way. Religion is more affection than emotion, thank God, and therefore, while our emotions vary in intensity, there's no reason why our affections should. Our loyalty of will may be and should be steady, whatever happens to our feelings. Reaction is a phase of our being, and we need not be afraid of it. All we need to fear is lest our religion rests upon feelings rather than upon the deep affections which are like tides running beneath the foam of the surface. We cannot hope always to feel as we do in the tense moments of existence. When the crisis passes, it may leave us limp and listless; but then we are summoned to keep our eyes steadily upon the great objects that call out faith and fidelity. At least we can recall the insight we once had, the keener vision of what life is and is meant to be, the direct and vivid experience of the Lord's delivering hand. Let moods come and go. But never, never let our affections waver. They will be acceptable to God when they are no longer glowing, provided that they are binding us constantly to His good and gracious will.

'Watch and pray,' Jesus told His disciples, when He realized far more than they did how much need they had to be upon the alert against themselves. 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall,' said the great Apostle. And, before our Lord and the Apostle, our Psalmist said much the same thing, and he is saying it still to ourselves, teaching us to-day to pray this wise and humble prayer of long ago: 'Thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before thee in the light of the living?'¹

¹ J. Moffatt, *His Gifts and Promises*, 30.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Pan more deadly than Mars.

'The forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.'—2 S 18^o (R.V.).

That statement is taken from one of the vivid battle scenes which the Old Testament writers were such adepts at describing.

We, too, are painfully, personally, and practically aware of the fact enunciated here, that the accompaniments and consequences of war can be far more disastrous than the actual fighting. It is the unexpected that happens, the unlooked-for that piles up the casualties. It was the place of shelter that shattered: the green sward was grimmer than the grey sword. One would never think that those pleasant woods of Ephraim would turn traitor—the orchard-closes of home. They afford some of the most charming woodland scenery that Syria knows. From noble oaks standing in luxuriant grass shot with a rich variety of wild flowers, the wood-pigeons rise in clouds, and jays and woodpeckers flash and chatter in every glade.

Of the battle of life, also, it is true that the forest devours more people than the sword devours. The *Odyssey* of life is as long and tragic a tale in its way as the *Iliad*. The old Greeks showed their knowledge of the fact that the wood can be as dangerous as the sword, when Homer makes Odysseus inquire: 'Did all those Achæans return safe with their ships, or perished any by a shameful death aboard his own ship, or in the arms of his friends, after he had wound up the clew of war?' This is the universal experience of the race; and they have hidden the warning in their tales.

'Some people's sins are evident,' says St. Paul, 'leading the world to an estimate of their characters, but the sins of others lag behind.' That is the Apostle's way of stating the too familiar truth that, although there are some notorious cases in which people fall openly in the sight of the world, cut down by the sword of the enemy, there are far more who succumb in the dark and hidden depths of the forest, unmarked by the public gaze.

One of the old commentators, taking the word 'devour' literally, explains that the fate which those who fled to the forest for refuge met with was to be devoured by the wild animals it sheltered. And readers of Dante will recall how he opens his great drama by representing himself as suddenly, when half-way through life, finding himself in

the midst of a dark wood infested with wild beasts.

In the midway of this our mortal life,
I found me in a gloomy wood, astray,
Gone from the path direct: and e'en to tell,
It were no easy task, how savage wild
That forest, how robust and rough its growth,
Which to remember only, my dismay
Renews, in bitterness not far from death.

And he tells how he encountered first a panther, and then a lion, and then a she-wolf, and how each successive encounter exposed him to fresh danger. That is Dante's way of telling us the same story and giving us the same warning. He found that it was in the mid-years of life that a man is apt to fail and succumb. Having escaped the violent edge of the sword—the more flagrant sins, he was in danger of going down before either the panther or the lion or the she-wolf—that is to say, before luxury, before pride, or before avarice.

The danger for most of us, especially those in the mid-years of life, all the experts seem to be agreed, is that we should become entangled in that which lured us to enter it at first because it looked attractive, and seemed to offer us a means of shelter and a way of escape in the battle of life. It may be something which in itself is innocent enough at first, but which proves our undoing if it come to entangle us so that it prevents us from going onward and upward.

It is just the tragedy of to-day that the forest devours more than the sword, that so many are lost to the cause of Christ and the Kingdom of God through no open sin, but just through entanglement with what our Lord called 'the worry of the world and the lure of riches.' We are being devoured of the wood if our own hearts condemn us that we are not so sensitive to the voices of the Spirit as once we were. If we are content with second-bests and unworthy compromises; if we have lost the edge of our appetite for the beautiful and noble things after which we used to hunger and thirst; if we are conscious of having lowered our standards of reverence, or of rectitude, or of morality; if we must admit to ourselves that we are not so punctilious in the observance of religious duties as once we were, then the forest has us in thrall. Our danger is not that we should be guilty of pursuing unworthy ends, but that we should fail of man's chief end, which is to glorify God.

The words in which the story of Absalom's fatal entanglement is told contain one of the grimmest pieces of irony to be found in the whole of Scripture.

'And Absalom rode upon his mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went on.' The man got stuck behind, and his beast went on without him! The city is full of stories like that, of men of great ability and great promise, whose very gifts became their undoing. Their latter end was emptiness—hanging in mid-air; and the business that was under them went on.

A French writer on Pascal has said that Christ has two great enemies, the god Priapus and the god Pan, and that of the two the latter is the more deadly. That is to say, that one can vanquish sensuality in its ugliest forms, but the easy-going idea that everything should be taken as it comes, and that nothing is really more important than anything else, is death to all moral earnestness and to all Christian endeavour.

And that is why it behoves those of us who care at all for the well-being of the nation's soul to resist all the insidious attempts which are being repeatedly made in so many quarters to filch from us the safeguards of spiritual life which have been handed down from the fathers. For we owe everything that we possess of iron in our will and of salt in our character to that old discipline which guarded the outposts because they were the King's territory as much as the citadel.¹

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Deliverance and Witness.

'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.'—Ro 8¹⁶.

No other form of literature carries the same authority as does sincere autobiography. The person who writes sincerely about himself deals at first hand and without rival with raw fact. Even here, if his story implicates others, there is possibility of more than one angle of vision, and therefore of more than one version of the account. But when a person turns a trained, candid mind upon the inner processes of his own life he is developing a theme where no rival authority can ever compete.

Now a record of the inner life may be either very dull or more thrilling than any tale of hairbreadth escapes. Some persons, perhaps the great majority, follow their type, alike in their virtues and in their vices. Even their periods of turbulence are accounted for by their age or their breeding or their circumstances. A candid and well-told account of

¹ H. L. Simpson, *The Nameless Longing*, 156.

any inner life-voyage would have some interest, but when there is movement, not circular and repetitive, but progressive and controlled, and demonstrating the victory of the spirit over its environment, there is no romance so thrilling as such a record of fact. In sixty verses Paul tells the epic story of his spirit's defeat and deliverance, suffering and victory. He switches the searchlight of his critical genius within and exposes his spirit naked for the warning and guidance of a world. It is a great, dignified judgment upon life, and as we read it something within us whispers, 'Yes, that is true, I too have felt it but dared not put it into words.' These self-critics, like Paul here and Bunyan in *Grace Abounding*, are the pioneers of the spiritual life. They make us realize that life is not a residence where consistency and docility are the major virtues, but an adventure where we must follow the right way in preference to the accepted way.

The story begins with a soul enslaved by a law on the one hand, and a body on the other—two jailers who are also at enmity with each other. The attempt to come to terms with rules and regulations has never been satisfactory. Between his active ego which he calls the flesh, but which we would call his psyche or ego-personality, and that rigid set of incorruptible laws, Paul's spirit was broken and defeated. If we have not tasted the same bitterness it is probably because our tastes are perverted until we can no longer make radical discriminations. High desires tugging against low deeds demand a wider arena than a human soul; they tear its walls by their conflict; and Paul, alive to it as we are not, cried out, 'Who shall deliver me?' Now, if we feel that he makes much ado about nothing, if we conclude that our condition before God does not matter so much as our standing at the Bank, then all that follows will only faintly interest us. We may study it detachedly as the psychologist studies the dreams of a dog. Whereas if we feel that Paul here pictures a crisis that is real, and therefore terrible, we shall welcome his thrill of deliverance and his joyful entrance into spiritual society.

1. From defeat and despair God delivered him through Jesus Christ. This living soul was saved by contact with a life that was free from his sins, but sharing with him a power and liberty that made him free. The law that had crushed him was a law that operated by penalty—a law of sin and death. This life that he shared was not lawless; the difference was that the new law was contributory to life and growth and fellowship. The

old law was of the earth, this was of the air. Air and earth are both necessary to human life, but we breathe the air and we tread upon the earth. Paul learned to breathe the air of God. It carried to him the life and vigour of Christ. He entered into Christ as we enter a new country, and on his entry he said, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after earth, but after the air.' There is a test for every one of us—not external or ecclesiastical or credal, but just the steady in-breathing of the atmosphere of Christ.

2. Through deliverance he came to kinship. As many as are led by the Spirit of God are the Sons of God. Tasting God's life, breathing God's air, one enters the Divine Society. You are a son, with a Father; not a lonely orphan impaled on a pointed law, but a member of a family. You have intercourse with God, and become possessed of the mind and will that were alive in Him.

3. How can we be sure of this? Paul was certain—therein lay his power—but can we translate his testimony into terms of our own experience? Paul advances a proof for our testing. It is the proof of corroborative testimony. The mutual bearing of witness is a very common proceeding in our daily life. Indeed, it takes place in every conversation. It provides the spice of friendship. We discuss a cricketer or a politician or a flower-bed, and find that we share certain judgments or tastes or delights or antipathies. We hold our convictions more happily when some one else witnesses to them.

Women going shopping compare their views on colour, materials, designs, prices—corroborate each other's taste—bear witness together. The scholar seeks authoritative witness in mathematics, history, language, or philosophy, and when by systematic comparison he is made worthy he enters the family. There is something like that in our spiritual pilgrimage. We look at life, especially our own attempt at it, in God's company. This involves, of course, our willingness to change our mind if we discover that our mind has been wrong. When His witness confirms our guess then our guess becomes a certainty, and many a joyous intuition lying shy and dusty in a corner is brought forth and polished and made confident and vocal by the witnessing Spirit of Christ. That Spirit, shining through His words, His life, His passion, witnesses to the depths of our nature, and makes life a great jocund adventure in friendship. It is this life of the Divine Society that Jesus pictures when He says, 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.'

Other helps there are, and we should use them all.

There are our contemporaries and sharers in Church fellowship; their witness is humanly conditioned and fallible, but very precious. There are outstanding heroic characters, whose spirit leaps across the chasm of years, of temperament and of fashion, to greet and encourage us. There is worship which transcends its bounds of usage and tradition to caress and impel the soul. There is Nature, breaking the bounds of struggle and fear to speak to the poetic soul. All these help select individuals in various ways, but this that Paul presses upon our notice is a way for every one—mystic, poet, man of affairs—the apostolic way of direct access. Life is lonely, perilous, individual; the hosts of darkness compass thee around and make inroads within. God-in-Christ comes within, banishes the darkness and fear, and sets up the Divine family.

Our minds, overblown by many winds, are often astonishingly unaware of the Divine approach. Are we willing to forsake loneliness and the unequal contest with law? To live life in consultation with God, to banish guilty secrecy and conspiracy, to live in the Divine Society and then create the Divine Society upon earth? ¹

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Arrested by Christ Jesus.

'May apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.'—Ph 3¹².

These expressions, 'apprehended,' 'laid hold of,' carry with them the suggestion of sudden arrest. They recall the oft-told and never-to-be-forgotten experience of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, when the Lord laid hold of him and changed the whole direction of his life. For that very reason, we may wonder whether we can use such language of ourselves. Sudden conversions have until recently been rather rare and out of fashion. Most of us are not conscious of having been arrested or captured in any such fashion. Whether with regret or with relief, we incline to say, Christ has not laid hold of me, has not apprehended me. Perhaps we draw this conclusion too hastily. It may be that His hand has been laid on us, though we are not aware of it. On reflection we may find that men who are conscious of no debt to Christ are yet under obligation to Him, and that every honest autobiography would require at least a section entitled 'What I owe to Christ.'

Again and again, in the things men take for granted, particularly in their ideals, they show

themselves to be apprehended of Christ Jesus. Thus no decent or honourable young man or woman contemplates the engagement of marriage without desiring to offer wife or husband a lifelong loyalty. Many young people, who would never profess or call themselves Christian, yet affirm the worth and beauty of Christ's ideal of marriage.

Let us consider a more far-reaching example of the permeating influence of Jesus. Not so very long ago members of the Adult School Movement were invited to answer the question, What is religion? There was silence in one school when this conundrum was propounded. At length, one of the members, an engineer, hazarded a reply. 'I should say, kindness was my religion. I feel I ought to be kind, and I feel ashamed when I lose my temper, even if it is only with the cat.'

The inadequacy of such a definition is undeniable. Kindness may be a soft sentimental thing, of little religious or moral value. To get at the nature of religion, we should have to probe the implications of my friend's sense of obligation and accompanying sense of shame. But the reason that others of us hesitated to give such a definition was not that we felt it inadequate, but that it was so obvious as to go without saying. Why do we rate kindness so high and put it so near the heart of our religion?

The historic truth of the matter is accurately expressed in a work of art, 'The Woman of Andros.' If one had asked for a definition of religion in Greece in the Hellenistic age, it is not likely that any one would have given the answer—kindness. This is the way in which Mr. Thornton Wilder depicts the position. He describes a woman on a Greek island, who follows the strange and dubious profession of an hetaira. Herself a social outcast, she feels pity for the weak and crippled, and realizes that this sentiment is not endorsed by the society in which she lives. She gathers round her failures of all descriptions. It is regarded as foolishness, as indeed it has generally been regarded in most ancient non-Christian civilizations.

Then you have the woman's conflicting prayers for the young man Pamphilus who has caught most of her spirit of compassion, and whose very name implies humanitarian sentiment. She prays that he may be released from the burden of pity, and then that he may be confirmed in his insight. 'Let him rest some day, O Olympians, from pitying those who suffer. Let him learn to look the other way. This is something new in the world, this concern for the unfit and the broken. Once he begins that, there's no end to it, only madness. It leads nowhere. That is some god's business.'

¹ J. Rutherford, *Key Words*, 115.

The full significance of the author's closing sentence lies in its relation to this problem. 'And in the East the stars shone tranquilly down upon the land that was soon to be called holy, and that even then was preparing its precious burden.' The whole suggestion of Thornton Wilder's book is essentially true. Instinctive kindness lies deep in human nature. It belongs to that something of God which we may believe to be in every man, something that anticipates Christ; something that welcomes Him. But it needed the coming of Jesus, His teaching, His story, His suffering to make this consideration for others, this care for the poor and broken, central or nearly central, if not in our religion, at least in our thought of religion, in the West. That kindness should be so central in our thought of religion is a sign that He has laid His hand upon us.

Loisy, whose judgment no competent scholar would lightly put aside, maintains that our modern humanitarianism is really rooted in Christianity. 'The best thing in modern societies is the feeling for humanity which has come to us from the gospel and which we owe to Christianity.'

If, then, we to-day regard all men as our brothers, hope and work for the solidarity of mankind, we owe it primarily to Christ. He has apprehended us, arrested us. We are under obligation to Him, whether we like it or not. But, the debt once acknowledged, need we dwell on it? We must not live in the past, we may be thankful for all or for much that the past has given us, but, as Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote, we cannot halt for thankings on the threshold ever more. We must act in the living present, and not be constantly dwelling on the influences which have shaped us from the past, but rather concentrate on the fresh resources and new tasks that are ours—in short, on what is modern.

Yes, this attitude would be completely justified if we might assume that we had realized St. Paul's ideal, absorbed all that Christ came to make possible for us, if we might believe that this guiding and controlling sense of humanity had become a second nature, or if we have found for it other and better supports than the influence and faith of Jesus. But can we confidently affirm any such assumption?

There is a remarkable passage in Bousset's *What is Religion?* which seems to raise and clear this issue, though not exactly as Bousset himself intended it. At one point he sketches in the figures of Goethe and Bismarck as representing two modern ideals in the realm of culture and politics, with a satisfying completeness. He points out how impossible it is to appreciate these great figures and formative

influences of modern history from the standpoint of Lutheran pietism. Bousset drew the conclusion that Christianity must outgrow the limits of traditional pietism.

We may grant that the narrowness of pietism needs correction, and yet something remains to be said. It is true, we moderns need Goethe and Bismarck. We need Goethe's ideal of an all-round spiritual culture and his embodiment of it as a corrective of the spiritual poverty which follows our growing specialization in intellectual pursuits and our concentration on practical achievements. We need Bismarck, with his stubborn loyalty and concentration of purpose, his courage, his readiness of resource, and his ability to distinguish shadows from realities.

But an historian of prophetic insight would tell us that we owe our recent calamities and present difficulties very largely to the fact that we moderns have admired Goethe and Bismarck so unreservedly and so uncritically. This is particularly true of the fascination of Bismarck and his statesmanship. We must, after all, judge Goethe and Bismarck by Jesus, and not *vice versa*. We still need to lay hold more fully and more firmly of that for which Christ has laid hold of us. It is not in the name and spirit of Goethe, still less of Bismarck, that we can realize the good life in the modern world.

Something similar is true of that other great figure whose name now inspires hope or fear in so many breasts. Karl Marx is to be the formative influence of the immediate future, and men are looking to him for salvation. It is true that he has something of the prophet's moral indignation, and that in his hatred of oppression and exploitation he carried on the prophetic tradition. But intellectually he was masterful and proud, disdainful of others, harsh, bitter, unloving and unjust. Only a bourgeois could hate the bourgeoisie as Marx did, and judge them so unfairly. And this bitterness of spirit is supposed to be the class-consciousness of the workers. It is not in this spirit that social wrongs are righted and humanity set free. If we let Marx usurp the place of Jesus, we shall suffer for it. Our wisdom is to lay hold of that for which Jesus Christ has laid hold of us.

Nor need we despair of making progress in the direction which St. Paul invites us to pursue. There is a sad passage in one of Thomas Hardy's letters, written in June 1919—the year and month of the Peace Treaty. 'I should care more for my birthdays if at each succeeding one I could see any sign of real improvement in the world—as at one time I fondly hoped there was . . . I almost think that people were

less pitiless towards their fellow-creatures—human and animal—under the Roman Empire, than they are now : so why does not Christianity throw up the sponge and say, "I am beaten," and let another religion take its place ?'

But unless there is some other and better religion in sight, this is simply cowardice and moral defeatism ; and there is no real justification for it, since, if

with all our modern resources we seek to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of us, we shall reap if we faint not ; and even now in our day and generation we may see greater things accomplished in Christ's name, in Christ's spirit, than any recorded in previous history. Let us gird up our loins and press towards the goal.¹

¹ H. G. Wood, in *Sermons of the Year 1932*, p. 117.

Divine Healing.

BY THE REVEREND ALEXANDER SMALL, B.D., BOREHAM WOOD, HERTS.

A GREAT deal of prominence has been given to this subject during recent months. Many feel that the Church has lamentably failed to emphasize and practise the healing of the sick. This charge of failure to fulfil her responsibilities raises many questions, and makes us ask what are the assumptions underlying this practice of 'divine healing.'

We may define 'divine healing' as a method of healing body and mind by the direct act of God without the intervention of man, in response to an act of faith. Why, however, should we speak of healing of this kind as 'divine' ? It marks it off as essentially different from that which results from the use of scientific means, and implies that such healing is not divine, or, at least, that the less there is of such means, the more divine the healing is. Surely this is wrong. The use of scientific means of healing is merely man working to produce those conditions in which healing becomes possible ; and the healing is just as much of God as if it came about without any human intervention at all. If this latter healing is the only 'divine healing,' then it logically follows that we should practise no other, or feel distressed that we had to resort to a method that failed of the best. There is no reason to suppose, however, that 'divine healing' is necessarily any better than healing of any other kind.

It rests on a view of grace that is open to serious objection. It views the grace of God as a direct influx of His Spirit into the spirit of man, somewhat akin to a reservoir receiving pure water from an invisible spring. This is to regard the grace of God as quasi-material to be given or withheld as God sees fit. Is the grace of God of this nature ? Is it not rather a gracious relationship to all His children irrespective of their deserts ? Is it not a

wrong conception altogether that it is given at one time, and withheld at another ? Would it not be truer to say that there is no experience that can come to us in which His grace is not revealed ; and that we need only to be alive to spiritual realities to see how gracious the Lord is ? This 'divine healing' rests on the assumption that God's grace in sickness must necessarily reveal itself in the gift of health : it does not see the gracious activity of God in sickness. This does not mean that God wants us to be unhealthy ; but it does mean that He is as gracious to us in sickness as in health. 'Divine healing' is based on the idea that God gives us His healing grace directly we believe that He will heal us, irrespective of our relationship to God, to life, and to others. If that were true, why do so many remain unhealed ? Indeed, we might go further and ask why there is any sickness or suffering in the world at all. Surely if God deals thus directly with our spirits, He could prevent all sickness from ever appearing ; and the fact that He does not would seem to suggest His unwillingness to be gracious. The advocates of 'divine healing' would doubtless reply that God would so act if only we believed He would ; for they attribute all their failures to effect a cure to a lack of faith. It might occur to them that their failures may have another explanation, and be due to a wrong view of grace, and to a misunderstanding of what faith is, for their view of faith is no less suspect than their view of grace.

Faith in their view is a confidence that God will heal ; so that everything is done to remove doubt, to silence the critical faculty, and to hold the mind to the belief that healing will undoubtedly take place. Is this the essence of Christian faith ?